

*Administration of Barack H. Obama, 2010*

**Statement on the 10th Anniversary of the Community of Democracies**  
*July 3, 2010*

Today Foreign Ministers from around the world gather in Krakow to mark the 10th anniversary of the Community of Democracies. The United States was a leader in the formation of the Community of Democracies and remains firmly committed to supporting its efforts to advance democratic values and institutions.

Its founding document, the Warsaw Declaration, stands as a powerful expression of our shared commitment to universal values and democratic principles. Ten years ago, 106 nations affirmed their dedication to respecting and upholding core democratic values including the right of citizens to choose their representatives through regular, free, and fair elections with universal and equal suffrage; to equal protection under the law; and to freedom of opinion and expression, peaceful assembly and association, and freedom of thought, conscience, and religion. The Warsaw Declaration also recognizes a core lesson that the United States draws from our own democratic journey: transparent, participatory, and accountable democratic institutions are essential for protecting and upholding these universal values.

The Community of Democracies reflects our determination to work together to promote and strengthen democracy around the world. This means focusing on what each of our countries can do to strengthen our own democratic practices and institutions. As I have said many times, there is no more powerful tool for advancing democracy and human rights than our own example. We promote our values by living our values at home.

This forum also challenges us to act collectively, as a community of democratic nations, to support countries undergoing democratic transitions and to push back against threats to democratic progress. For instance, the United States is particularly concerned about the spread of restrictions on civil society, the growing use of law to curb rather than enhance freedom, and widespread corruption that is undermining the faith of citizens in their governments. As people around the world confront these challenges, they have tools that could not have been imagined 10 years ago, including new technologies that provide unique and powerful opportunities for advancing human rights and democracy.

I commend Lithuania for its leadership of the Community and its efforts to focus the group's work on today's pressing challenges including growing threats to civil society, the empowerment of women, and the linkages between poverty, democracy, and development.

I welcome this celebration of the Community's first 10 years and believe that its role in fostering strong and effective cooperation among the world's democracies is essential for confronting the challenges ahead. Working together in partnership, we can advance the dignity of all human beings and the rights that are universal.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Community of Democracies, 10th anniversary.

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